

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE



Forest Management Recommendations for the Comet Darner Dragonfly



Background

Damselflies and dragonflies (Order: Odonata) are conspicuous and ecologically important aquatic insects with approximately 155 species documented in Maine. The Comet Darner (*Anax longipes*) is one of the state's rarest dragonflies, listed as Special Concern due to its narrow state distribution (only in southern and coastal Maine), and low number of populations. The breeding habitat of the Comet Darner is clean, shallow lakes and ponds, often with extensive aquatic vegetation.

The larvae of these dragonflies are found in the aquatic benthos where they may require several years to mature. Adults generally emerge in early June and have a flight period that lasts through August. Adults forage on smaller aerial insects (mosquitoes, mayflies, etc.) and spend much of their time taking refuge within riparian forest vegetation.

Management Recommendations

Many of Maine's wildlife species require or benefit from intact shoreline forest habitat. MDIFW recommends the following practices, adapted from *Threatened and Endangered Species in Forests of Maine: A Guide to Assist with Forestry Activities* (1999), for the Comet Darner to protect water quality for larvae and riparian vegetation for adults:

1. **Extent:** Maintain a 150-foot wide forested riparian management zone around lakes, ponds, and wetlands hosting documented occurrences.
2. **Activity within the Riparian Management Zone (0 to 150 feet):**
 - Avoid any harvest activity or disturbance within 50 feet of the high water shoreline
 - Beyond 50 feet, manage with single-tree or small group-selection cuts that maintain a 60-70% canopy cover in an evenly distributed stand
 - Harvest during dry or frozen ground conditions
 - Avoid or minimize the construction of permanent roads or openings
 - Build temporary bridges across all perennial streams prior to any motorized equipment crossing
 - Avoid the use of herbicides and insecticides